



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Coalition receives \$90,000 grant to benefit Baldwin County Schools

SUMMERDALE, Ala. – The Baldwin County Education Coalition (BCEC) received a \$90,000 grant from Impact 100 Baldwin County at its annual meeting last week. The grant was awarded to BCEC from the education category for the project known as “Opening Minds and Doors through Child Literacy.” This project supports Baldwin County Public Schools’ (BCPS) Guided Reading Initiative, which was identified as a best practice and strategic priority in the BCPS Plan for Academics.

Guided Reading is a research-based instructional process that meets the needs of all students. The initiative empowers teachers by training them to teach in different ways to small groups of students with similar reading behaviors. It also provides teachers and students with quality reading materials and resources.

“We are so very grateful for the support of Impact 100 and honored to be among so many worthy nonprofit organizations,” said Terry Burkle, executive director of BCEC. “We appreciate the impact they are making across our county. The ability to read proficiently lays the foundation for a child’s success in school and life. It opens a child’s mind for learning and doors of opportunity.”

The project will focus on all elementary and intermediate schools in the Bay Minette, Foley and Robertsedale feeder patterns impacting almost 9,000 students in grades kindergarten through sixth. These schools were selected based on longitudinal data that identified the three feeder patterns with the lowest reading proficiency scores.

A pilot of the initiative that took place last fall supports Guided Reading as a best practice with proven results:

- Prior to the pilot, the third grade reading proficiency was below state average for 11 of Baldwin’s elementary schools. Those 11 schools were identified as Tier II (or at-risk) by the State Department of Education. By spring 2017, 10 of the 11 schools were no longer at-risk.
- Six of the 10 schools ranked in the top 20 for student gains in Alabama; Silverhill Elementary ranked third in the state with 131 percent growth.
- Students at all proficiency levels experienced gains.
- Students who were once reluctant to read are now excited about reading and are allowed to choose what they are interested in reading.

Funds from the grant will be used to invest in the professional development of our teachers, who are on the frontlines everyday making a difference in the lives of our children, and for quality content-specific reading libraries that focus on math, science, social studies and STEM texts.

“As a rapidly growing school system with limited district funds, we’re dependent upon community partners, such as Impact 100, to accomplish the literacy vision for Baldwin County,” said Burkle.

About Baldwin County Education Coalition

The Baldwin County Education Coalition is an independent, non-profit, nonpartisan organization of public school advocates. We work together for systemic improvements and through seven local education foundations that serve communities across Baldwin’s 1600+ square miles. Our strength is in the value we bring to our individual communities and our shared vision for creating world-class schools. For more information, visit betterbaldwin.com.

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